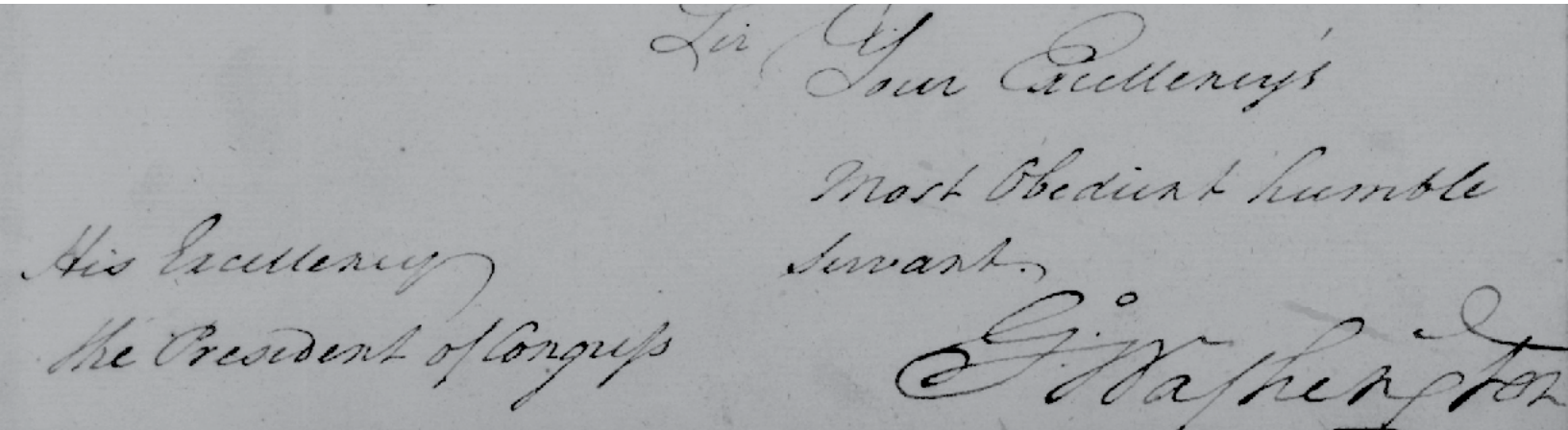
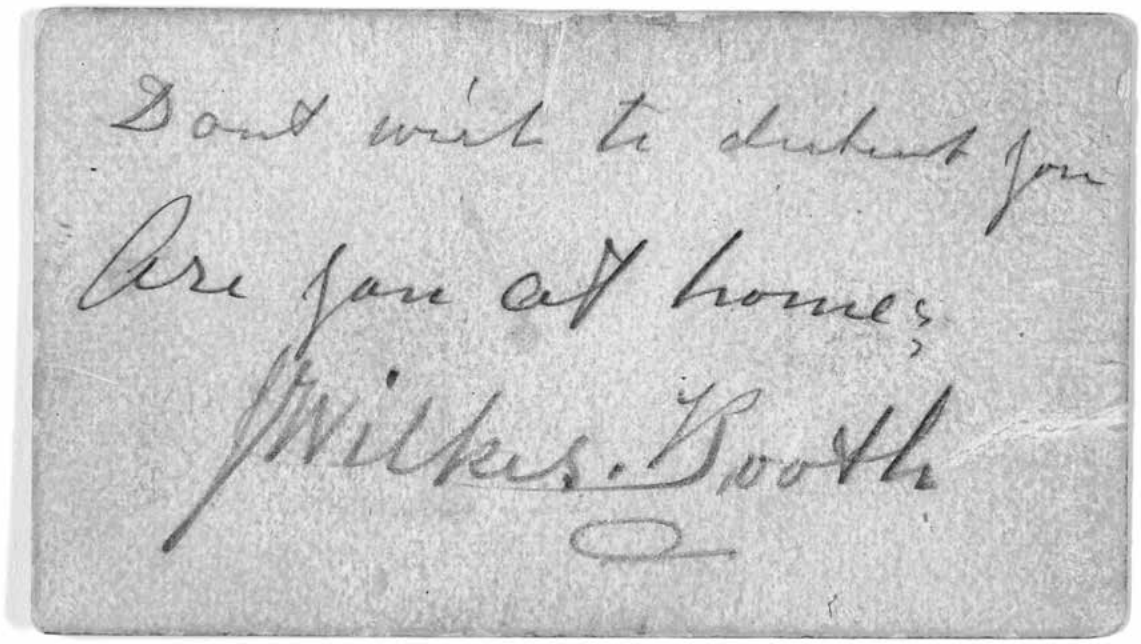
Making Their Mark

SIGNATURES, FAMOUS AND ORDINARY,
SET AMERICA'S COURSE AND REVEALED THEIR OWNERS





The act of signing your name can be routinely simple, or it can be the stroke of a pen that changes many lives—and the course of history.

We sign for credit card purchases many times each week. We write our names and a message on cards to colleagues retiring, getting married, or ailing. We provide our signatures to acknowledge the receipt of a package. We affix our signatures to petitions with thousands of other citizens.

Our actions probably don't change the world much.

But some figures in American history have, with a simple stroke of a pen, changed the world for thousands or millions of people, for better or worse.

Opposite: President Johnson with his mentor as a senator, Senator Richard Russell, at the White House, December 7, 1963. Johnson used his imposing stature as one tool in his own brand of political persuasion, known as the "Johnson treatment." *Above:* On the afternoon of April 14, 1865, just hours before he assassinated President Lincoln, John Wilkes Booth left this calling card for Vice President Andrew Johnson at his Washington, D.C., hotel. George Atzerodt was to kill Johnson that night, but he lost his nerve. It is still unknown why Booth left his card with Johnson. *Left:* George Washington's signature on his letter to Congress asking how he should resign as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army.

John Hancock signed his name so large, and with such flair, on the Declaration of Independence that "John Hancock" has become a synonym for signature.

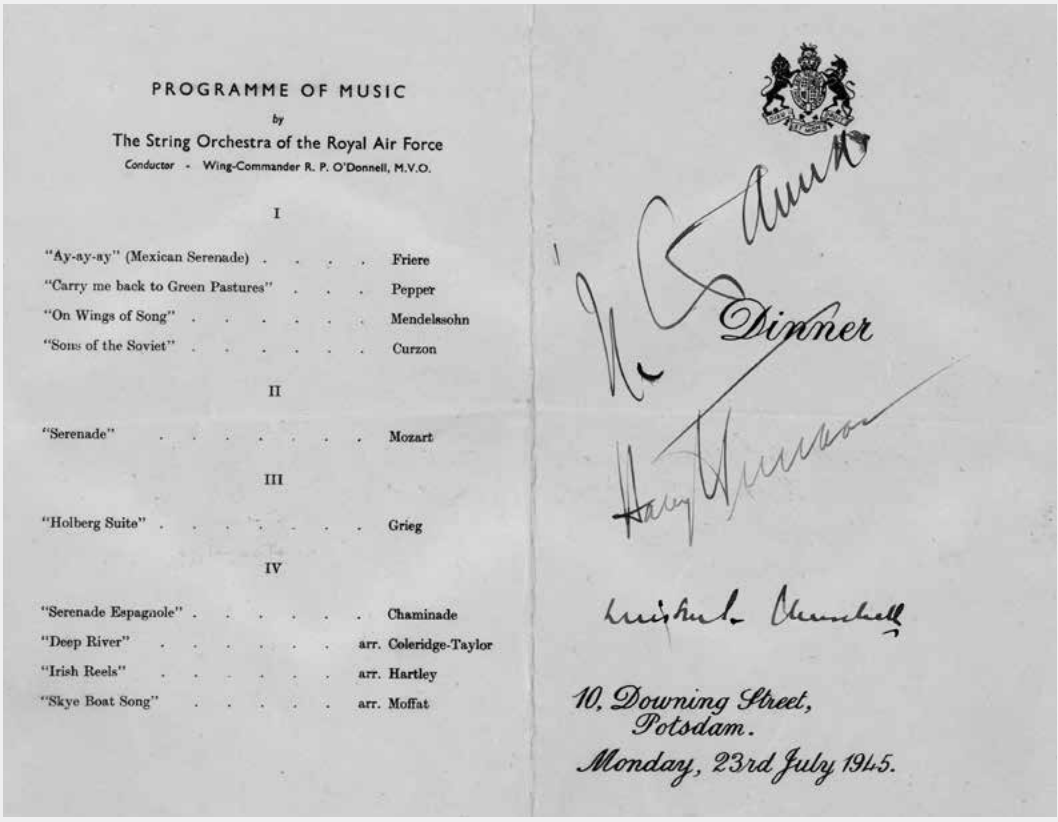
President Harry S. Truman signed two executive orders in 1948 that desegregated the nation's armed forces and the federal workforce. Within a year, 18 agencies had desegregated, and some agency heads who had not cooperated were removed from their positions.

President Thomas Jefferson, who held deeply contradictory beliefs about the morality and legality of slavery, signed legislation abolishing the international slave trade and hoped to finally settle one aspect of the contentious issue of slavery.

These signatures, as well as many others and a wide range of artifacts, are part of a new exhibit at the National Archives Museum in Washington, D.C., "Making Their Mark: Stories Through Signatures," which runs through January 5, 2015, in the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery.

"Making Their Mark: Stories Through Signatures" is made possible in part by the Foundation for the National Archives with the generous support of Lead Sponsor AT&T. Major additional support is provided by the Lawrence F. O'Brien family and members of the board of the Foundation.

The exhibit draws on the billions of government records and artifacts from 19 National Archives facilities nationwide to showcase a unique collection of signatures—and signature artifacts—and tell the stories behind them.


PROGRAMME OF MUSIC

by

The String Orchestra of the Royal Air Force

Conductor - Wing-Commander R. P. O'Donnell, M.V.O.

I

"Ay-ay-ay" (Mexican Serenade) . . . . Friere
"Carry me back to Green Pastures" . . . Pepper
"On Wings of Song" . . . . . Mendelssohn
"Sons of the Soviet" . . . . . Curzon

II

"Serenade" . . . . . Mozart

III

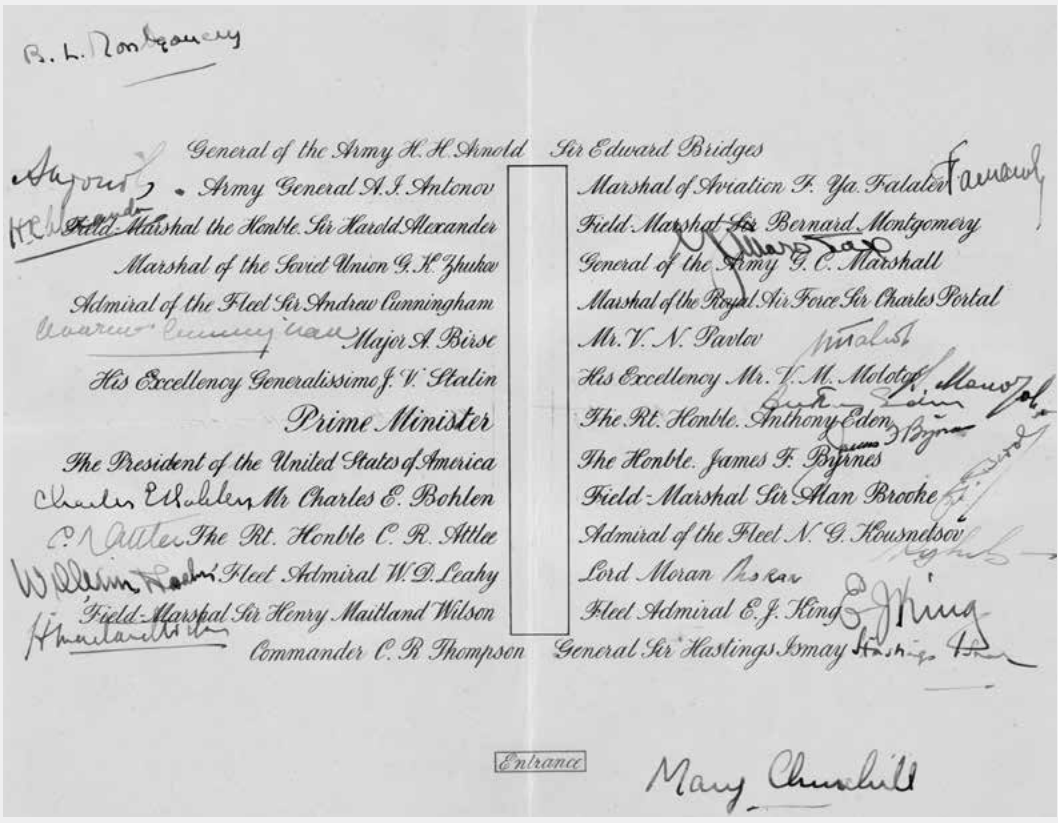
"Holberg Suite" . . . . . Grieg

IV

"Serenade Espagnole" . . . . . Chaminade
"Deep River" . . . . . arr. Coleridge-Taylor
"Irish Reels" . . . . . arr. Hartley
"Skye Boat Song" . . . . . arr. Moffat

Dinner

10, Downing Street,
Potsdam.
Monday, 23rd July 1945.

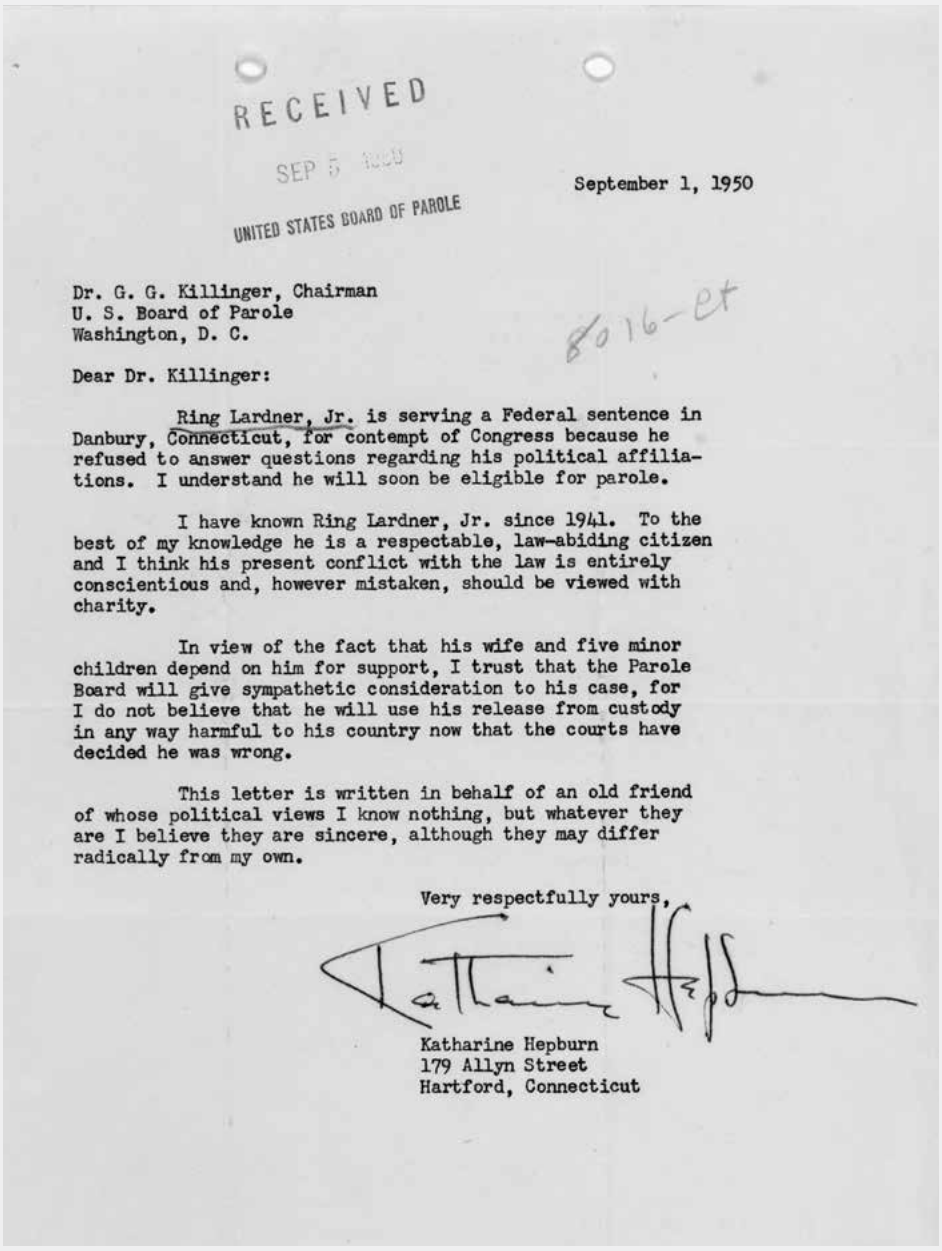

General of the Army H. H. Arnold
Army General A. I. Antonov
Field Marshal the Honble. Sir Harold Alexander
Marshal of the Soviet Union G. K. Zhukov
Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham
Major A. Birse
His Excellency Generalissimo J. V. Stalin
Prime Minister
The President of the United States of America
Mr Charles E. Bohlen
The Rt. Honble C. R. Attlee
Fleet Admiral W. D. Leahy
Field-Marshal Sir Henry Maitland Wilson
Commander C. R. Thompson

Sir Edward Bridges
Marshal of Aviation F. Ya. Falalev
Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery
General of the Army G. C. Marshall
Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Charles Portal
Mr. V. N. Pavlov
His Excellency Mr. V. M. Molotov
The Rt. Honble. Anthony Eden
The Honble. James F. Byrnes
Field-Marshal Sir Alan Brooke
Admiral of the Fleet N. G. Kousnetsov
Lord Moran
Fleet Admiral E. J. King
General Sir Hastings Ismay

Entrance

Mary Churchill

Top left: John Hancock's famous and distinctive signature appears on the Senate "credentials" for Tristram Dalton, of Massachusetts, February 10, 1799. *Above:* At a dinner during the Potsdam Conference on July 23, 1945, President Harry Truman asked attendees to sign the program. Truman, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin signed the cover, and others signed the inside pages.



RECEIVED
SEP 5 1950
UNITED STATES BOARD OF PAROLE

September 1, 1950

Dr. G. G. Killinger, Chairman
U. S. Board of Parole
Washington, D. C.

8016-Et

Dear Dr. Killinger:

Ring Lardner, Jr. is serving a Federal sentence in Danbury, Connecticut, for contempt of Congress because he refused to answer questions regarding his political affiliations. I understand he will soon be eligible for parole.

I have known Ring Lardner, Jr. since 1941. To the best of my knowledge he is a respectable, law-abiding citizen and I think his present conflict with the law is entirely conscientious and, however mistaken, should be viewed with charity.

In view of the fact that his wife and five minor children depend on him for support, I trust that the Parole Board will give sympathetic consideration to his case, for I do not believe that he will use his release from custody in any way harmful to his country now that the courts have decided he was wrong.

This letter is written in behalf of an old friend of whose political views I know nothing, but whatever they are I believe they are sincere, although they may differ radically from my own.

Very respectfully yours,

Katharine Hepburn
179 Allyn Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Actress Katharine Hepburn wrote to the U.S. Board of Parole on behalf of screenwriter Ringgold Wilmer "Ring" Lardner, Jr., on September 1, 1950. Lardner and nine others had been found guilty of contempt of Congress and were blacklisted from Hollywood by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).

"This sweeping exhibit is an opportunity to showcase not only notable signatures, but the signatures and stories of people unknown to history, and how they have made their mark on the American narrative," said Jennifer Johnson, the curator of the exhibit.

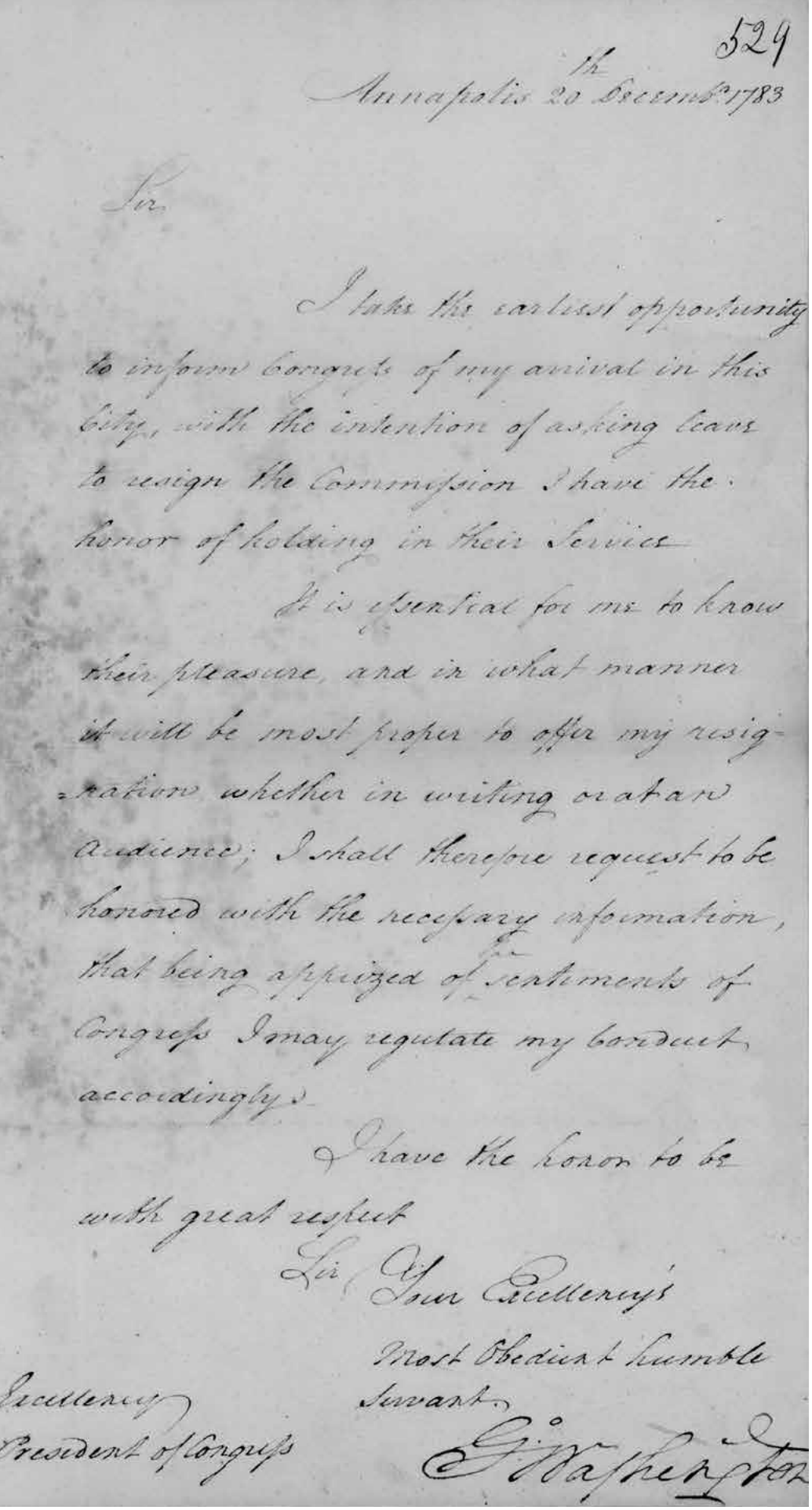
"'Making Their Mark'" uses items from all over the country," Johnson added, "and these records allow visitors to see the scope and breadth of the records the National Archives preserves."

Many of the treasured documents in the immense holdings of the National Archives are inscribed with signatures.

Many of the signatures are notable, such as those of the 56 men, including John Hancock, who signed the Declaration of Independence, becoming traitors in the eyes of George III. Others are famous individuals, such as legendary actress Katharine Hepburn and baseball great Jackie Robinson.

Hepburn, noted for her portrayals of fearless women, wrote a letter to the U.S. Board of Parole in 1950 asking that screenwriter Ring Lardner, Jr., be granted parole. Lardner had been jailed for refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee investigating communism in Hollywood.

By doing so, Hepburn was putting herself and her career at risk. Nonetheless, she went on to enjoy a long and acclaimed film career despite the letter.



524

Annapolis 20 Decemb. 1783

Sir

I take the earliest opportunity to inform Congress of my arrival in this City, with the intention of asking leave to resign the Commission I have the honor of holding in their Service

It is essential for me to know their pleasure, and in what manner it will be most proper to offer my resignation whether in writing or at an audience; I shall therefore request to be honored with the necessary information, that being apprized of sentiments of Congress I may regulate my conduct accordingly.

I have the honor to be with great respect

Sir Your Excellency's

Most Obedient humble Servant.

Excellency

President of Congress

G. Washington

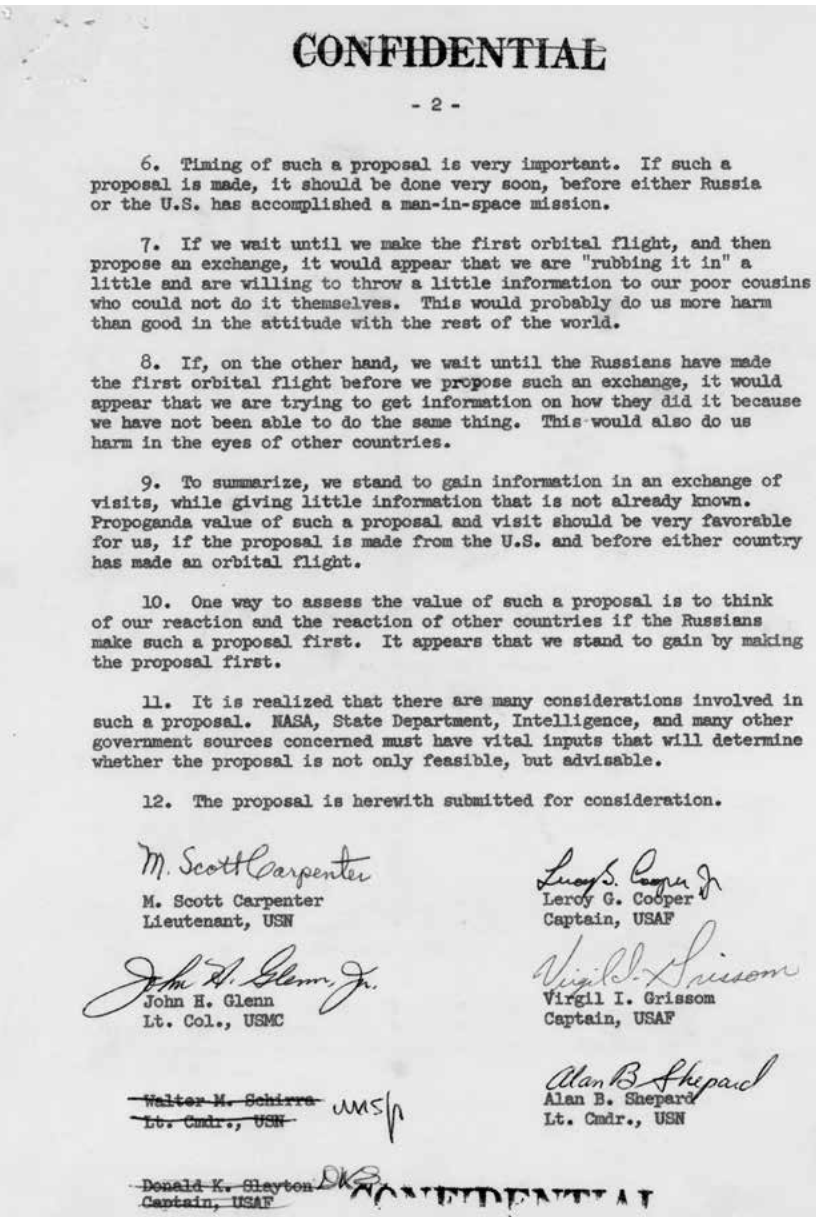
Then there are signatures of those whose marks on history may have been fleeting but reveal the world around them. In World War II, a Japanese American inside an internment camp signed a loyalty questionnaire. In 1938 a Jewish tailor amid the increasing Nazi presence in Europe wrote to President Franklin D. Roosevelt pleading for help in leaving Hungary because of "political happenings."

In the 19th century, Texas landowner Polly Lemon petitioned Congress but, unable to sign her name, only signed with her mark, an "X." So did Harriet Tubman, who served as nurse, cook, spy, and scout for the Union during the Civil War. Decades after the war, a determined Tubman, signing with an "X," sought a pension for her services during the war.

Frederick Douglass wrote to President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 asking that his son, the first African American to enlist in the Union Army from New York, be discharged because of illness.

Above: The cigarette holder was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's signature accessories. *Left:* In his letter to the Continental Congress on December 20, 1783, at the end of the Revolutionary War, Gen. George Washington asked how he should offer his resignation, "whether in writing or at an audience." His deference to Congress set an important precedent for civilian rule. *Right:* General Eisenhower wearing an "Ike jacket," 1943. After the general had the standard army jacket shortened and tailored, it became standard issue after November 1944.


U.S.
U.S.



CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

6. Timing of such a proposal is very important. If such a proposal is made, it should be done very soon, before either Russia or the U.S. has accomplished a man-in-space mission.

7. If we wait until we make the first orbital flight, and then propose an exchange, it would appear that we are "rubbing it in" a little and are willing to throw a little information to our poor cousins who could not do it themselves. This would probably do us more harm than good in the attitude with the rest of the world.

8. If, on the other hand, we wait until the Russians have made the first orbital flight before we propose such an exchange, it would appear that we are trying to get information on how they did it because we have not been able to do the same thing. This would also do us harm in the eyes of other countries.

9. To summarize, we stand to gain information in an exchange of visits, while giving little information that is not already known. Propoganda value of such a proposal and visit should be very favorable for us, if the proposal is made from the U.S. and before either country has made an orbital flight.

10. One way to assess the value of such a proposal is to think of our reaction and the reaction of other countries if the Russians make such a proposal first. It appears that we stand to gain by making the proposal first.

11. It is realized that there are many considerations involved in such a proposal. NASA, State Department, Intelligence, and many other government sources concerned must have vital inputs that will determine whether the proposal is not only feasible, but advisable.

12. The proposal is herewith submitted for consideration.

M. Scott Carpenter
M. Scott Carpenter
Lieutenant, USN

Leroy G. Cooper Jr.
Leroy G. Cooper
Captain, USAF

John H. Glenn, Jr.
John H. Glenn
Lt. Col., USMC

Virgil I. Grissom
Virgil I. Grissom
Captain, USAF

~~Walter M. Schirra~~
~~Lt. Cmdr., USN~~

Alan B. Shepard
Alan B. Shepard
Lt. Cmdr., USN

~~Donald K. Slayton~~
~~Captain, USAF~~

Left: When NASA proposed in a memo that the United States and Russia cooperate through an exchange of visits, five of the seven astronauts signed the memo.
Right: The original Mercury Seven, 1960, were to be the first American men in space.
Below: Eisenhower's "short snorters," a collection of 19 bank notes, representing over 10 countries and signed by over 90 men and women. Servicemen adopted the tradition of signing and exchanging currency and then sharing a drink with those they met along the way. *Opposite:* Harriet Tubman's general affidavit relating to her claim for a pension, ca. 1898. She signed with her "X," claiming $1,800 for her wartime service as a nurse, cook, and scout.

well known to be reputable and entitled to credit, and who, being duly sworn, declared in relation to aforesaid case as follows:

(NOTE.—Affiants should state how they gain a knowledge of the facts to which they testify.)

My claim against the U.S. is for three years services as Nurse and cook in hospitals, and as commander of Several Men (Eight or nine) as scouts during the late War of the Rebellion, under directions and orders of Edwin M. Stanton Secretary of War, and of several Generals.

I claim for my services above named the sum of Eighteen hundred dollars.

The annexed copies have recently been read over to me and are true to the best of my knowledge information and belief.

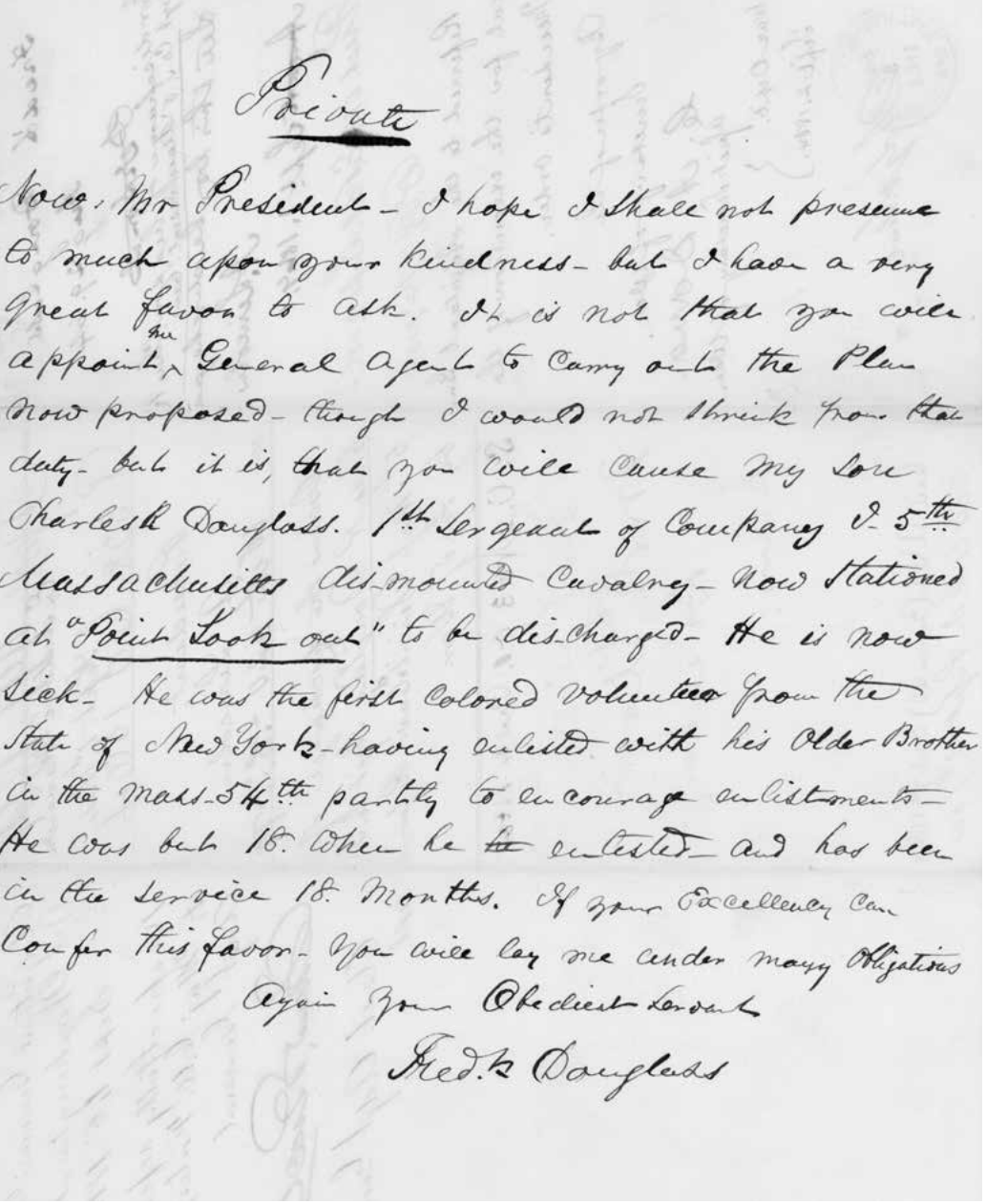
I further declare that I have no interest in said case and am not concerned in its prosecution. and allowance.

Per
Harriet X Davis
Sate Harriet Tubman
mark

Orin M. McCarty
M. Elsie McCarty.

(If Affiants sign by mark, two witnesses who write sign here.)

(Signatures of Affiants.)

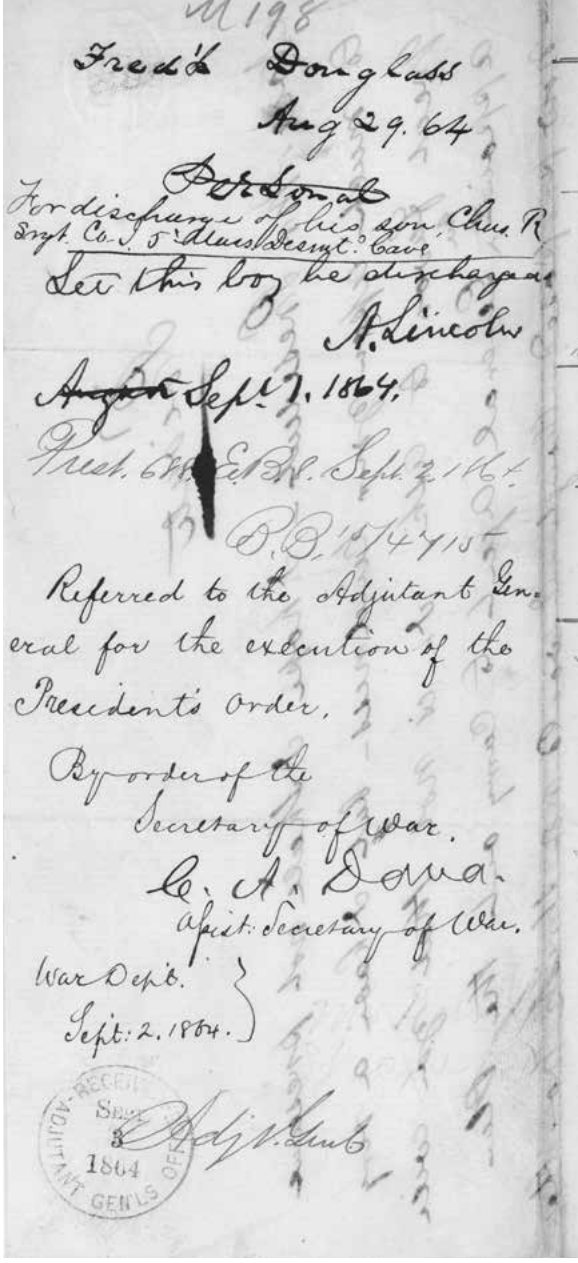


Private

Now, Mr President – I hope I shall not presume too much upon your kindness – but I have a very great favour to ask. It is not that you will appoint an General Agent to Carry out the Plan now proposed – though I would not shrink from that duty – but it is, that you will cause my son Charles R Douglass. 1st Sergeant of Company D. 5th Massachusetts dismounted Cavalry – now Stationed at "Point Look out" to be discharged – He is now sick – He was the first Colored Volunteer from the State of New York – having enlisted with his Older Brother in the Mass 54th party to encourage enlistments – He was but 18 when he enlisted – and has been in the service 18 Months. If your Excellency can Confer this favor – You will lay me under many Obligations

Again Your Obedient Servant

Fred'k Douglass



Fred'k Douglass

Aug 29. 64

Personal

For discharge of his son, Chas. R. Sergt. Co. D. 5th Mass. Decmt. Cav.

Let this boy be discharged

A. Lincoln

~~August~~ Sept 7. 1864.

Referred to the Adjutant General for the execution of the President's order.

By order of the

Secretary of War.

C. A. Dana.

Asst. Secretary of War.

War Dep't.

Sept: 2. 1864.

RECEIVED SEP 3 1864 ADJUTANT GEN'LS OFFICE

Adj't Gen'l

Above: Frederick Douglass wrote to President Lincoln in late August 1864, asking that his youngest son, Charles, be discharged from the Army. He noted that Charles was sick and had served for 18 months. *Right:* Lincoln wrote on the back: "Let this boy be discharged." *Opposite:* Richard Nixon's application to be an FBI special agent, April 29, 1937. Nixon never received a reply, and in later years, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover informed Nixon that he had been accepted as a special agent but was not hired due to budget cuts

"Let this boy be discharged," Lincoln wrote on the back over his signature.

Some documents are important not for the individual names but for the strength of many names brought together for a common cause. Among the petitions asking for change is a letter to President Gerald R. Ford with 75 senators signing in unity to "reaffirm the commitment . . . that has been the bipartisan basis of American policy for over 26 years and five administrations."

Then there are those that offer a window into a very young America, such as the 1799 petition signed by all employees at the U.S. Mint, promising to return to work once the yellow fever epidemic passed. George Washington wrote to the Continental Congress humbly asking how he should resign as commander-in-chief so he could return to his home in Virginia.

As the Allied leaders met at Potsdam, Germany, in the spring of 1945 to decide the shape of the post–World War II world, President Harry S. Truman passed around his dinner program for all to sign. Two of the signers were British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Communist Party Boss Josef Stalin.

Some signatures didn't seem significant at the time. In 1960, a 14-year-old from Beverly, Massachusetts, wrote to President Eisenhower asking for an autographed photograph. His name was Dave Ferriero, and he was doing what millions of children have done over the years.

Today, Dave Ferriero is Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero, the person in charge of the National Archives.

"This exhibit brings a new meaning to

24. List the names of any relatives now in the Government service, with the degree of relationship, and where employed:

None

25. What is the lowest entrance salary you will accept? Standard for special agents

26. Are you in a position to accept probationary employment at any time, without previous notice, and, if notice is required, how much? Yes - no notice necessary

27. In the event of appointment will you be willing to proceed to Washington, D.C., upon 10 days' notice and at your own expense? Yes

28. If appointed are you willing and prepared to accept assignment or transfer to any part of the United States where services are required, for either temporary or permanent duration? Yes

e photograph not larger than 3 by 4¼ inches. Write your name plainly ›graph to be taken *not more than 30 days prior to date of application.*

Respectfully,

Richard M. Nixon
(Signature of applicant as usually written)

NOTE.—If the applicant desires to make any further remarks or statements concerning his qualifications or in answer to any question contained in the application, the same should be made on a separate sheet of paper, numbering the remarks in accordance with the original questions.

st be subscribed to by all applicants for positions in the Federal Bureau of Investi-

to before me by the above-named applicant, this 29 day of April, 1937, at city (or town) of Durham, county of Durham, and State (or Territory or District) of North Carolina

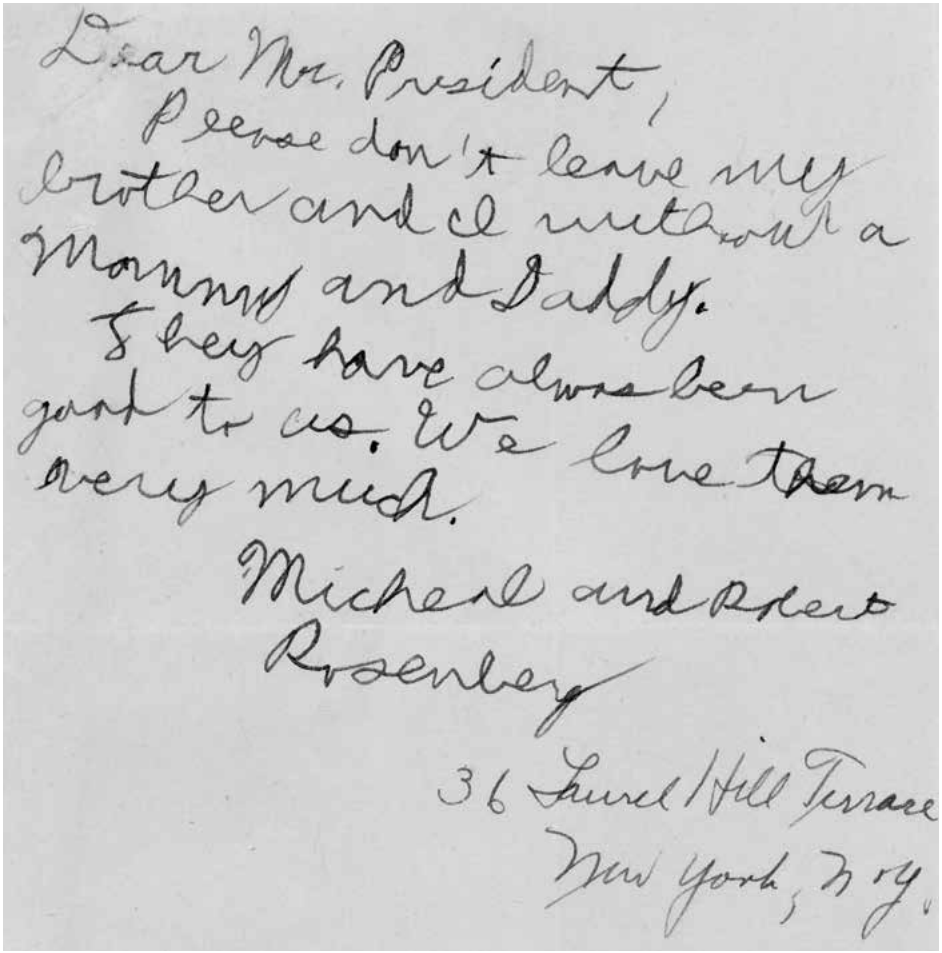
Lina E. Wilson
(Signature of officer)

[OFFICIAL IMPRESSION SEAL]

Notary Public
(Official title)

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 7—2092

My Comm. Expires
Jan. 15, 1939.



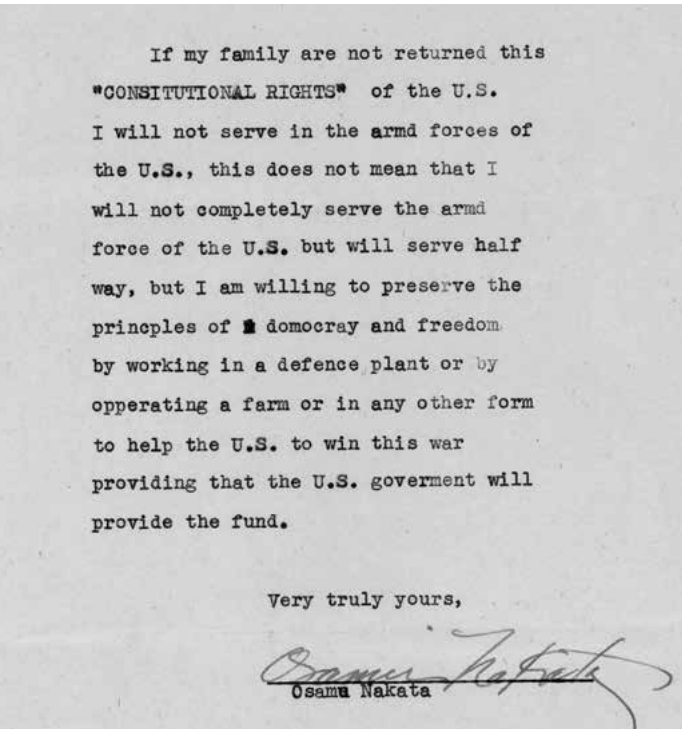
Dear Mr. President,
Please don't leave my brother and I without a Mommy and Daddy.
They have always been good to us. We love them very much.
Michael and Robert Rosenberg
36 Laurel Hill Terrace
New York, N.Y.

our goal of increasing access to records at the National Archives," Ferriero said. "We see signatures that, once affixed to a document, often produced a historic moment that changed the course of world history or the lot in life of a single individual."

"Signatures can also tell us a lot about their owners and the circumstances under which they were made. Hancock was defiant, Lincoln was decisive, Tubman was determined, Hepburn was fearless, and Truman was confident—all evident in their signatures or 'marks,'" Ferriero added.

Not everything in "Making Their Mark" is a signature on paper or parchment.

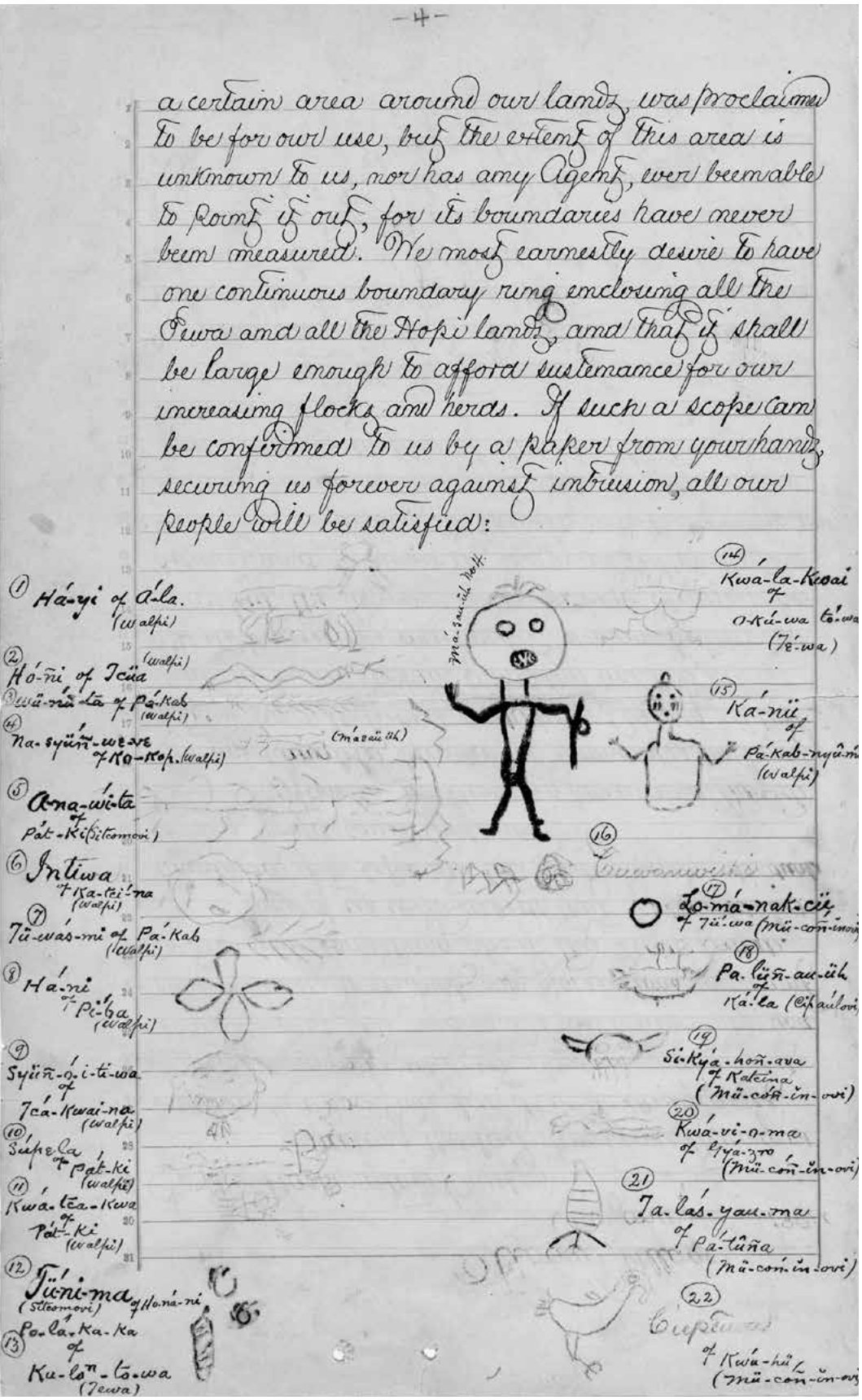
Left: Robert Rosenberg, age 10, and Michael Rosenberg, age 6, pleaded for the lives of their parents, convicted spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, in a letter to President Eisenhower. The Rosenberg parents were sentenced to death for passing secret information on the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. *Below left:* Osama Nakata, a Japanese American internee, signed a statement, ca. 1942, that he "will not serve in the armed forces of the U.S." until the constitutional rights of his family were restored. *Below right:* Japanese Americans were uprooted from their communities on the west coast and relocated to camps such as this one at Poston, Arizona, for the duration of the war.



If my family are not returned this "CONSITUTIONAL RIGHTS" of the U.S. I will not serve in the armd forces of the U.S., this does not mean that I will not completely serve the armd force of the U.S. but will serve half way, but I am willing to preserve the princples of ■ domocray and freedom by working in a defence plant or by opperating a farm or in any other form to help the U.S. to win this war providing that the U.S. goverment will provide the fund.

Very truly yours,

Osamu Nakata



President Franklin D. Roosevelt left many famous words, but he also sought to convey confidence for a nation pulling itself out of the Great Depression and into World War II. His famous ivory cigarette holder with a quill mouth piece was his favorite and the one he used most.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II, had a signature style, in his case a jacket. He asked that the standard issue field jacket be tailored for him, and the result was the "Ike jacket," which comes just to the waist. Countless photographs show General Eisenhower in his jacket with other generals and with his troops. It became standard issue to U.S. troops after November 1944.

President Lyndon B. Johnson was known for his ability to persuade others to agree with his point of view after giving them the signature "Johnson treatment." His large and commanding 6-foot 4-inch frame helped him convince many people to support his position or legislation.

A famous photograph shows Johnson leaning over Senator Richard B. Russell of Georgia, his friend and mentor in the Senate. In 1964, Johnson made clear to Russell that he was going to get the landmark civil rights legislation through the Senate despite his mentor's opposition.

A signature tells a story. It may be at the bottom of a letter, or it may be at the bottom of legislation that will change the course of history.

"Making Their Mark" invites visitors to look at a signature, imagine the moment the document was signed, and realize how the signers have made their mark on history. P

A page from a Hopi (Moqui) petition signed by all the chiefs and headmen of the tribe, asking that the federal government give the tribe collective title to their lands rather than make allotments to individuals as determined by the Dawes Act.